

Region Deserves Credible and Authoritative Safety Assessment for Indian Point

Washington, DC - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY), Congresswoman Nita Lowey (D-NY), Congressman John Hall (D-NY), and Congressman Eliot Engel (D-NY) today renewed their call for a safety assessment at Indian Point by a panel that is independent, credible, and authoritative, to replace the evaluation being conducted by a panel appointed by Indian Point owner and operator Entergy.

The panel Co-Chair James Rhodes is the former head of the nuclear industry-funded Institute of Nuclear Power Operations, and was hand-selected by Entergy to lead this panel. Mr. Rhodes selected every other member of the panel, which begins meeting today in Cortlandt.

"The people who live and work near Indian Point will not be fooled by this charade of an 'independent' safety assessment panel that is comprised of members hand-picked by Entergy," Hinchey said. "We don't have time for games. We cannot wait around for more radioactive leaks, sleeping guards, and fires with no alarms. The NRC must commission a real independent safety assessment today."

"While Entergy's willingness to undergo a safety review is a small step in the right direction, the panel conducting the review is anything but independent," said Lowey. "Our region deserves an Independent Safety Assessment involving state and local officials, as well as the NRC, that will address not only Entergy management, but also the ability to protect the public in the event of an emergency."

"Entergy's decision to move forward with a so-called 'independent safety evaluation' of Indian Point by its hand-picked panel pays lip-service to the legitimate concerns about the plant but falls well short of the oversight needed to guarantee that Indian Point will not be relicensed unless it's safe," said Hall. "Indian Point has been plagued by operational issues and is just miles away from one of the most densely populated areas in the country. The review of an Entergy-assembled panel cannot be allowed to stand as a substitute for a real Independent Safety Assessment, the stakes are too high."

Rep. Engel said, “This so-called ‘independent’ panel was appointed by Entergy, and it is being funded by Entergy. That is not a true Independent Safety Assessment. Entergy has proven many times that it has neither the ability nor the desire to protect the health and safety of the communities surrounding Indian Point. This panel is nothing more than Entergy’s attempt to avoid meaningful oversight by pretending to police itself.”

While questioning the legitimacy of the Entergy-appointed panel, all four Members continue to insist on an Independent Safety Assessment (ISA) at Indian Point, as would be required under legislation they introduced in February, 2007. H.R 994 would establish a 25-member ISA team and a five-member Citizens Review Team to ensure public accountability in the process and bind Entergy to the requirements of the panel or be denied a new license at the facility.